UCLA Faculty Association

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Thursday, July 3, 2025

Drake Letter

Letter from UC President Drake:*

July 2, 2025

CHANCELLORS

Dear Colleagues:

Upholding the values of freedom of speech and inquiry are core commitments of the University of California. Members of the University community have the right to express their views on matters of public importance. In addition, University policies provide mechanisms for groups such as academic campus units and student governments to take public positions on issues (Regents Policy 4408 https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4408.html; PACAOS 63.00 https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710526/PACAOS-60).

University policies also require that financial and business decisions be grounded in sound business practices including competitive bidding (BFB-BUS-43 Purchases of Goods and Services https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3220485/BFB-BUS-43; Supply Chain Management). This principle also applies to **student governments**, where University policy provides that "any financial and business activity under the control of student governments is operated in accordance with sound business practices and is consistent with legal requirements and University policies and procedures" (PACAOS 67.00). Actions by University entities to implement boycotts of companies based on their association with a particular country would not align with these sound business practices.

The right of individuals and groups to express their views on public matters is distinct from the responsibility of University entities to conduct their financial affairs in a manner consistent with University policy and applicable law.[i]

This letter reaffirms both: the rights of students, faculty, and staff to express their views, and the University's obligation to ensure that its units do not engage in financial boycotts of companies associated with a particular country.

Sincerely,
Michael V. Drake, MD
President

cc: Division Leaders
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[i]https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/university-california-statement-divestment; UC Chancellors Statement on Israeli Academic Boycott (Dec. 2018):

https://amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/UC-Chancellors-statement-on-Israeli-academic-boycott-Dec-2018.pdf.

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*https://ia600402.us.archive.org/9/items/2-final-hjaa-report.-the-soil-beneath-the-encampments/UC-Drake%20letter%20banning%20student%20govt%20boycotts%207-2-2025.pdf.

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From the Bruin: *UC President Michael Drake announced in a Wednesday letter that student governments at all UC campuses are banned from boycotting companies associated with Israel. The letter followed directives from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health that promise to deny grants to organizations with anti-Israel boycotts and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The University has previously expressed opposition to boycotts and divestment from Israel, including in an April 2024 statement released the day after the Palestine solidarity encampment at UCLA – the organizers of which called on the UC to divest from companies with ties to the Israeli military – began...*

Kira Stein, the chair of the UCLA Jewish Faculty Resilience Group, said in a statement over text message that official student government boycotts against specific countries are "discriminatory and divisive" and do not promote peace. She added that the University's decision promotes inclusivity and respectful discourse in an academic setting. "Since UC student governments are funded by student fees and operate with university recognition, it is both reasonable and necessary that they represent all students and refrain from discriminatory practices," Stein said.

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

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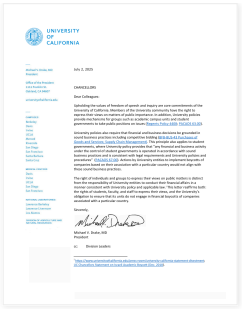

USAC passed a resolution in February 2024 endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. The resolution alleged that Israel is engaged in "apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and genocide," as well as called on the UC Board of Regents to divest from companies associated with Israeli weapons manufacturing. The council also previously amended its bylaws to freeze the transfer of funds into its endowment until the University divests from companies participating "in the violation of human rights. Both the resolution and the bylaw change were proposed by then-USAC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Alicia Verdugo, who resigned in February amid allegations that their office deliberately avoided hiring Jewish staffers.

USAC President Diego Emilio Bollo declined to comment on Drake's directive...

Full story at https://dailybruin.com/2025/07/03/student-governments-across-uc-campuses-banned-from-anti-israel-boycotts.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 8:08 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, diversity, Drake, UC, UCLA

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 28

From the Chronicle of Higher Education: *For months, Harvard University's resistance to many of the Trump administration's escalating demands has served as a kind of beacon to higher ed... Yet even as the university pursues its legal options, the institution appears open to a resolution... No details have emerged about what a potential settlement might look like, or how close such a settlement might be. But any agreement would reverberate across the sector just as loudly as Harvard's resistance has.*

In the short term, a deal would preserve some semblance of continuity on campus, no small matter as the university plans its fall course schedule and contemplates the loss of thousands of students and billions in grants. In the long run, a deal would avoid the uncertainty and expense of yearslong court battles that could reshape the relationship between higher education and the federal government on matters of academic freedom, civil rights, and institutional autonomy...

Already, several Harvard professors say they're concerned because they have not been given any information about possible negotiations or whether their perspective is being considered... Other faculty members are more hopeful about a potential deal. Jeffrey D. Macklis, a neurobiologist, thinks an agreement that maintains Harvard's academic freedom and restores research grants could "be a wonderful and a beneficial outcome for the nation and the world."

The termination of Harvard's government funding has been "devastating" for his lab, which examines brain development and had received grants to study the causes of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, and frontotemporal dementia, among other conditions. "That has canceled research that, in my view, is not Harvard research," he says. "It's research for which I was hired by the citizens of the United States."

He trusts Harvard's leaders. And he is unwilling to frame the interactions between his university and the government as a "fight." "Is it a fight when a married couple or partner pair disagree on family priorities?" he said. "Maybe it is a discussion. Maybe it's even negotiation. Maybe it is educating each other so that both parties understand with empathy the views of the other." ...

Outside of Harvard, higher-education leaders are also torn between faith in Garber and skepticism that the government would agree to a deal that preserves the sector's independence and ideals...

Full story at https://www.chronicle.com/article/what-a-harvard-deal-would-mean-for-higher-ed.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: Harvard, health care, politics

Straws in the Wind - Part 28

From Inside Higher Ed: *Public colleges and universities in Texas have been asked to identify which of their students are undocumented so they can be charged out-of-state tuition, The Texas Tribune reported. The move follows a district court ruling [in June] that prohibits students who are not legal residents from paying in-state tuition. In a letter to the state's public college presidents..., Texas Higher Education commissioner Wynn Rosser wrote that "each institution must assess the population of students who have established eligibility for Texas resident tuition … who are not lawfully present and will therefore need to be reclassified as non-residents and charged non-resident tuition."*

The new rates will go into effect for the fall 2025 semester, Rosser wrote. The letter offered no further guidance about how institutions might comply...

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/06/25/texas-colleges-asked-identify-undocumented-students.

And from the NY Times: *The cyberattack that caused a widespread shutdown of Columbia University's computer systems last week appears to be the work of a "hacktivist" — a hacker who also stole student data with the apparent goal of furthering a political agenda, a Columbia official said on Tuesday. During the outage, which began on June 24, a smiling image of President Trump appeared on some computer screens at the university, including on public monitors in the student center. The Columbia official, who was not authorized to speak publicly, did not provide a motivation for the attack.*

But Bloomberg News, which received messages from the apparent hacker, said that the person described stealing student data in order to see if Columbia was using affirmative action in its admission policies, a practice the Supreme Court effectively barred in 2023... The university is in the midst of trying to negotiate a settlement with the Trump administration to unfreeze more than $400 million in federal funding for research, which the administration pulled over its claims that Columbia had not done enough to protect Jewish students from antisemitic harassment...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/01/nyregion/columbia-university-hacker.html.

From Yale Daily News: *Yale is implementing an immediate 90-day hiring pause, reducing non-salary expenses by 5 percent, delaying several construction projects and lowering annual salary increases for faculty and staff members. Faculty and staff received an announcement of those changes on Monday afternoon in a message signed by Provost Scott Strobel, Vice President for Finance Stephen Murphy and Senior Vice President for Operations Jack Callahan. The message was also posted to the Office of the Provost's website.*

The message referred to Congress's present consideration of a steep increase to the rate at which Yale's endowment will be taxed, one of the proposals in President Donald Trump's sweeping "big beautiful bill." Since the House of Representatives advanced a version of the legislation in May, Yale administrators have warned that the tax hike could imperil the University's research budget and student financial aid...

Full story at https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2025/07/01/yale-pauses-hiring-tightens-budget-in-anticipation-of-endowment-tax-hike/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Columbia, diversity, politics, Texas A and M, Texas State U, U of North Texas, U of Texas, Yale

Where's the Money? - Part 2

From the Washington Post: *The U.S. DOGE Service has lost the power to control the government's process for awarding billions of dollars in federal funds, the latest sign of the team's declining influence following Elon Musk's high-profile exit from Washington, according to two people familiar with the situation and emails obtained by The Washington Post.*

Three months ago, DOGE employees wrested control of a key federal grants website, grants.gov, which serves as a clearinghouse for more than $500 billion in annual awards, The Post reported. For most of the program's existence, federal agencies including the Defense Department posted their funding opportunities directly to the site, where thousands of outside organizations could see and apply for them — until April, when DOGE staffers changed the website's permissions to give themselves power to review and approve all grants across the government.

But [last] Thursday, federal officials were instructed to stop routing the grant-making process through DOGE, according to emails obtained by The Post and the two people, both of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a sensitive situation. The decision follows fears that months of DOGE-linked delays would lead to what critics allege would be the illegal impoundment of federal funds...

Full story at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/06/27/doge-loses-control-federal-grants/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: politics

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Straws in the Wind - Part 27

From the San Diego Union-Tribune: *Citing rising inflation and the uncertainty of federal funding, UC San Diego Health eliminated approximately 230 positions Monday, notifying its 14,000 employees of the layoffs in the late afternoon... The action came amid a nationwide wave of retrenchment in health care that, as some industry medical sources have documented, started in January, growing as the budget debate in Washington, D.C., focused on cuts to Medicaid, Medicare and benefits granted by the Affordable Care Act.*

And those costs have inflated quickly, with vital workers who fought through the COVID-19 pandemic demanding better compensation, especially in California, where housing costs make it difficult for young and well-paid workers in the health sector to buy their first house. Patricia Maysent, UC San Diego Health's chief executive officer, said in an all-hands memo to staff Monday that the university health system's financial picture demanded action...

Full story at https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2025/06/23/layoffs-hit-uc-san-diego-health-other-systems-may-follow/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: health care, UC-San Diego

The Trial

Probably less dramatic than the Orson Welles film, the much-delayed trial involving a lawsuit by Anderson School lecturer Gordon Klein against the Regents, UCLA, and the dean of Anderson, was due to start July 1. From the Bruin:

A UCLA lecturer suing UC administrators for over $22 million will see his case go to trial Tuesday. Gordon Klein, a continuing lecturer in accounting, filed a lawsuit against Antonio Bernardo, the dean of the UCLA Anderson School of Management, and the UC Board of Regents in September 2021. Klein was suspended in June 2020 for his response to a student's request for grading accommodations for Black students, and was reinstated in September 2020. The trial date has been pushed back several times. The trial will be a bench trial – meaning that a judge, rather than a jury, decides the outcome – at the Santa Monica Courthouse...

Full story at https://dailybruin.com/2025/06/30/trial-to-begin-in-lawsuit-filed-by-ucla-lecturer-against-administrators.

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*For past blog coverage:

https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2021/09/reinstated-year-later-now-lawsuit.html; https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2020/09/reinstated.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:25 AM No comments:

Labels: academic freedom, UC Regents, UCLA

Tough Credit

From Inside Higher Ed: *...The Senate version of the reconciliation bill, which President Donald Trump has urged Congress to pass as early as next week, would cap professional degree loans at $200,000 and all other graduate loans at $100,000. Both the House and the Senate also proposed completely eliminating Grad PLUS, an unsubsidized federal loan with no borrowing limit that has helped students from modest backgrounds pay for graduate degrees since 2006. In the two decades since Grad PLUS was implemented, the number of Americans with a postgraduate degree has doubled, according to 2021 Census data.*

...Proponents of the loan program argue that growth is a sign of its success in expanding access; its critics say it's because colleges saw an opportunity to boost enrollment in highly profitable programs. Federal graduate loans can be used for any postgraduate degree, including Ph.D.s. But master's degrees and professional degrees, such as those in law and

medicine, tend to be far more expensive. Graduate students also have much less access than undergraduates to institutional and public aid, meaning low- and middle-class students almost always have to borrow.

Some universities, Kelchen said, rely heavily on their graduate programs for tuition revenue—particularly large private institutions such as New York University and the University of Southern California, both of which enroll more graduate than undergraduate students...For some smaller universities that have struggled to maintain undergraduate enrollment, including Simmons University in Boston and Nova Southeastern in Florida, boosting graduate program offerings has become a key revenue stream.

...Conservatives aren't the only ones skeptical of the current graduate loan system. Sandy Baum, a nonresident senior fellow at the liberal-leaning Urban Institute and a longtime scholar of student debt, believes that unlimited loans have enabled more students to borrow heavily to pay for degrees whose economic returns are often dubious. Graduate students make up about 15 percent of all higher education enrollment in the U.S. but account for nearly 40 percent of all outstanding student debt, according to a 2020 report from the Congressional Budget Office...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/admissions/graduate/2025/06/26/can-graduate-programs-survive-federal-loan-caps.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: NYU, politics, USC

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